

ANOTHER C.M.S. OUTPOST

By Mike J. Burrows,

In the catalogue of the 15th February 1978 sale of British West Africa, by Robson Lowe, an illustration of one of the items contained in Lot 110 can be found. Study of this half-tone block, which also appears in The Philatelist for January, reveals that the QV Jubilee 2½d value is a C.M.S, perfin, clearly cancelled with the scalloped type of handstamp for BURUTU dated - 3 AUG 1898. For those with S.G. Part 1, this is type 6.

Moving to lot 111 in the auction catalogue I found that this also contained further examples of the Church Missionary Society perfin, Through the good offices of the Robson Lowe Organisation I am able to report that in this lot three other 2½d's and a 5d Jubilee were on offer. These were handstamped with the Royal Niger Company double framed BURUTU sans-serif handstamp, S.G. type 7. The break down of these four being o one pair 2½d perfinned C.M.S; the single is perfinned C.M S and attached to the same piece as the 5d, which is a C M.S.

The Royal Niger Company established the BURUTU post office during 1896. BURUTU itself was situated on the Niger at the mouth of the Forcados River.

Further to my notes on the AKASSA use of this perfin, Jack Brandt tells me that over in Canada he noticed at a local stamp show, a display of Nigerian forerunners. One of the items was a 5d Jubilee on piece. The handstamp being as S. G. Type 4, dated 7 JAN 96, perfinned C.M.S , also on the piece was a 1d lilac dated 17 FE 96. Although Jack said that some of the postmark was unreadable he gave me enough details to state that I am fairly certain that it was the one in use by the ST. Leonards-on-Sea Station Office. Now, whilst realising that the mail could have been off-loaded on to the Sussex Coast, it is more probable that the 1d depicts a re-direction to a farther inland address. This being the normal Victorian practise. Another point reported was that the other items in the show bore examples of the single ring PAID/LIVERPOOL/ BR PACKET/date, in an orange-red colour.

When I first got together notes on this particular usage of the C.M.S. perfin, I found it difficult to understand why a Missionary Society went to the trouble of using a perfin for these isolated missionary outposts. Recently, when checking some East African notes I came across a letter published in 'Postal History International'. This letter was sent by the Deputy Lay Secretary of the C.M.S to the G.P.O, in London on 19th August 1898 and the salient points of interest are as follows,

" An irregular practise which appears to prevail at Mombassa, of detaching the Uganda stamps from postal packets after removal the Protectorate stamp has been affixed to defray the postage to England."

It would seem from other accounts that the inhabitants were keen to possess a picture of the Queen!